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Dear Dave:

I enjoyed reading about the apparently inaccessible canyon you found.

The reason I offered to send you the Quiroga book was because I thought you might find it interesting. If you ever want to borrow it, let me know. Besides your practical motive for wanting to learn Spanish, I imagine you would enjoy exploring Latin-American literature.

When you to get around to exploring Mexico, unless I get down there to go with you, I'll enjoy hearing about your experiences.

Yes, you may send me a book for my birthday, provided its width does not exceed 7 inches. If it's bigger than that I'd have to make a trip to the post office to get it, and that's such a pain in the ass. Also, if you send it, it must be with the understanding that if it doesn't look to me as if I'll like it, I won't read it, but will trade it in at the place where I trade paperbacks (if it's a paperback) to get something that's more to my taste. I assume you don't mind

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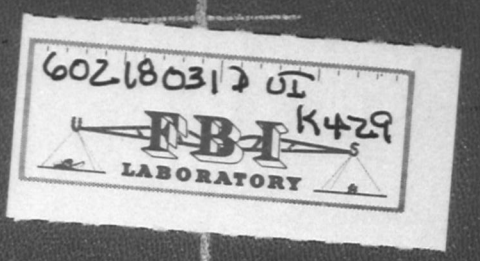
it when I send you a book or something without asking you about it before hand, since you haven't expressed any wishes to the contrary.

Here's a favor you can do me IF and when you find it convenient. If you're busy or find it inconvenient, just forget it or put it off indefinitely or whatever you want. I have an idea. Years ago I have seen, in college newspapers, ads offering to do translations at such and such a price. It occurs to me that I might be able to make a little money by placing such an ad and doing translations of Spanish material. Worth a try, anyway. So, if you pass any large universities on your way home to Lombard, or after you get there, or any time you happen to have a convenient opportunity, if you can get hold of any college newspapers, and if you can find in them any ads for translations, you could do me a favor by clipping them out and sending them to me along with the name and address of the paper. I could then respond to some of the ads just to find out what the going rates are, and if it seems promising, I could try placing such an ad myself.

What do you eat when you're in the desert? How do you make your flour edible? I won't ask you about your



blood-pressure, because I don't like to be asked questions about my health myself, and it may be that you feel the same way about it; but in case it hasn't occured to you, baking powder contains a great deal of sodium — I suppose a spoonful of baking powder is almost like a spoonful of salt in that respect. Any kind of bread is superior to pancakes on a steady diet. You can make bread in a frying pan if need be, or by heating the ground with a fire and burying the bread in the ashes, or by improvising an oven. But its true that without a civilized oven, some experience in judging and controlling the heat is necessary for consistent success with the bread. Sourdough and yeast bread are much superior to baking powder bread. Sourdough bread worked fine for me for some time. But then apparently my sourdough pot got contaminated with some objectionable organism, because the stuff got spoiled. Since then I've been unable to make sourdough because every time I try, the stuff goes bad — apparently my whole cabin is contaminated with the spores. So I bought some commercial yeast and started a new pot with that. Apparently this yeast is stronger than the objectionable organism, because I am able to keep my "starter" pot going without having it get spoiled. This yeast also raises the bread

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faster and higher than the sourdough did, (4)
but on the other hand it doesn't have the
superior flavor. I understand they also
make pancakes with sourdough and yeast, but
I haven't tried that. Another way to use
flour is to make noodles — just roll the
dough out on a board and slice it into
strips. But you have to roll it out
extremely thin if the noodles are to be good.
Tastiest if you add whole wheat flour and a
little cornmeal to the dough.

You remember that old Doctor Smith that
was here in Lincoln? Well, he died. It
was about time — he was 94 years old.
While he was in the hospital they posted
up notices all over town asking people
to write to him, and the same thing in
the Blackfoot Valley Dispatch, which is a
little local mini-newspaper that someone
has taken to publishing here. It was all
disgustingly saccharine. I did send him a
note anyway — he did treat my foot for
nothing, and all that saccharine crap
wasn't his fault. I've been told that he
was a doctor back in Massachusetts — he
got sick of the "rat race", as its called,
and came out here — it must have been
quite a while back.

Meanwhile, a new doctor, one Doctor

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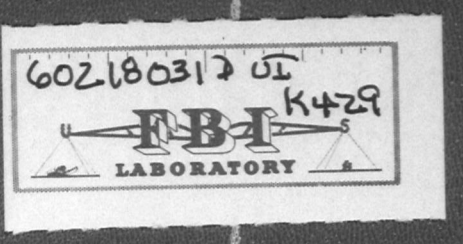
Shiel or Shiels has settled here. Jim (5)
told he came here for the same reason,
to escape the rat race. Jim also told me
that the first thing he did when he got
here was buy himself an airplane. Sounds
like he's trying to bring some of the
rat race out here with him. But I
will have to give him credit for the fact
that he only charges 10^{00} for an
office call, when the going rate is 14^{00}.
Also, I've known him to make at least
one house-call. A few months ago my
neighbor Butch Gehring (son of the defunct
Gehring from whom we bought the lot)
fell off a scaffold, knocked himself unconscious,
and broke both arms. By chance I
was present at the time. The doctor came
out and looked him over before sending
him off in the ambulance. He gave
an impression of competence, seemed to
know what he was doing — but of
course such impressions are not
reliable. So who knows? Maybe he came
out here because he got discouraged after
killing 42 patients in one week.

—Ted